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The *herem* in the favela: the "Evangelical trafficker" and the Hebrew Bible concepts of war and violence

Abstract. This article asks whether the Hebrew Bible concepts of war and violence, especially the concept of *herem*, could be applied to the study of gang-related violence in Brazil. Specifically, this article looks at two cultural phenomena evidencing a great degree of porosity between the Evangelical church and organized crime in Brazilian favelas, namely, the "Evangelical trafficker" (Cunha, 2015) and "Evangelical exemption" (Brenneman, 2011). This porosity has been described before, but the causes have been given in mostly sociological terms without enough attention paid to the exegesis of biblical stories, which are likely to be known in Evangelical circles and hence likely to influence traffickers who move in these circles. This article discusses the cultural context of both phenomena and then asks, first, how the Hebrew Bible concepts of war and violence could be mediated into the favela circles, and second, whether the concepts could serve as ordering lenses of analysis for gang-related violence in Brazil. Extant terrorist and story research, as well as relevant Brazilian research on drug-related violence, are sourced throughout the article to support the proposal. Ultimately, however, the article proposes to test and finetune this connection via a focused field study. Thus, the posited connection gains practical implications and can be adapted to other research settings where a similar blending of research and violence is observed.

Keywords: Biblical studies, Hebrew Bible, Pentecostalism in Brazil, gang-related violence.

The intertwining of religion and violence has been a source of discomfort for Bible commentators. One example would be the many interpretations that hope to make sense of the passages dealing with the conquest of Canaan, in which the

killing of innocent civilians is described as sanctioned by God[1] (for some examples, see Niditch, 1993, pp. 5–10). But the contexts of war and violence are anything but past long gone to many people worldwide. This article explores how communities dealing with violent crime may appropriate the logic behind the Hebrew Bible stories and build it into their stories of what is happening to and through them, thus contextualizing and sustaining the brutality.

The article constitutes an interdisciplinary exploration of whether the Hebrew Bible concepts of war and violence could help us answer some of the unexplained questions relating to the study of gang-related violence in Brazil. As such, it looks at other research conducted in the field and investigates how biblical concepts could complement and elucidate some of their findings. The studies cited are Brazilian-based,[2] with some exceptions of relevant Central American sources (Garcia, 2018; Brenneman, 2011; Wolseth, 2008). To investigate how the Hebrew Bible concepts could find their way into the Brazilian communities and underpin some of their customs, the article calls upon extant research on terrorism. The support of this research is promising, but ultimately, the goal is to propose a rationale for a field study that would test and finetune the connection posited here.

The article proceeds methodically through the issues it investigates. First, it discusses the context of the connection, namely, the intersection of Evangelical Christianity and violence in Central and South America, and pinpoints gaps in the research to date (section 2). Then, it focuses specifically on the phenomenon of so-called Evangelical traffickers in Brazil (section 3). Afterward, it asks how the Hebrew Bible concepts of war and violence could have trickled down to influence criminal ethos in Brazilian communities (section 4). Finally, it discusses the Hebrew Bible stories of war and violence, mainly following the categorization of Niditch (1993), and suggests how they might provide a fresh ordering of issues in extant research on gang-related violence (section 5). The article ends with a proposal for a field study and lists specific research questions. Hopefully, a future article will report on the results of such a study.

The research context

The uneasy ties between Christianity and violence in Central and South America have attracted researchers, who have written at length about a relationship of conviviality and opposition, impermeability and porosity between Evangelical and criminal

[1] In the limited context of this article, violence mostly refers to warfare-related bloodshed, including but not limited to the killing of innocent people. The Hebrew deity is portrayed sanctioning such violence especially in conquest and historical narratives (*inter alia*, Deut 7:2–3; 20:17–18; Josh 6:16–21; 10:40; 1Sam 15:3–35). Even though gang-related violence does not constitute an officially declared armed conflict, it is described informally as *guerras* 'wars' by people affected by it (see usage in Rocha, 2017) and bears a lot of markings of an all-out war (high mortality rates, extreme brutality, frequent collateral damage, etc.)

[2] The studies cited were conducted in five Brazilian states: Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, and Pernambuco. Two articles (Alessi, 2021; Gortázar, Alessi, 2020) are reports for El País Brasil, one is a Guardian article (Phillips, 2022; cited for some of the wording but content-wise very similar to Alessi's 2021 report).

organizations.[3] One example of this in/compatibility is the tradition, well-known in Central and South America, of the so-called "Evangelical exemption" (Brenneman, 2011). According to this tradition, a conversion, usually to the Evangelical faith, is the most clean-cut way of leaving a criminal organization without incurring the death penalty, and traffickers themselves check whether the conversion is genuine (ibid.; also Wolseth, 2008). In the Brazilian context, where this exemption is known and applied (Rocha, 2017, pp. 369–371), research has also indicated that in some contexts, traffickers may "blend faith and violence" (Philips, 2022), meaning they have it both ways (e.g., Cunha, 2022, 2015, 2009; Gouvea, 2019; Medrado, 2016; Machado, 2014; Dias, 2008[4]). The specifics will differ from place to place, but it seems that for many, involvement in church is seen as an acceptable complement to, or extension of, involvement in crime.

Researchers have struggled to explain this symbiosis. The reasons suggested stay mainly within the realms of sociology or, sometimes, the theology of the Evangelical group in question (e.g., Gouvea, 2019; Brenneman, 2011; Cunha, 2015). Few if any studies have taken a closer look at the Hebrew Bible, although it is a standard frame of reference for Evangelical converts. Of course, the propensity of new believers to use biblical stories, symbolism, and jargon to frame their experiences is noted in the sources above. This propensity is discussed from an ethnographic angle, however, with little attention given to exegesis. It is assumed, apparently, that once the stories are "reoralized," their exegesis does not matter. This reasoning might be justified: Biblical stories do take on meanings in interpretation that they might not have had initially. Nevertheless, the question still presents itself about what makes these stories so compatible with traffickers' experience in the first place. That the Hebrew Bible contains violence is not a satisfactory answer. Rather, it holds clues as to how this violence, both inflicted and experienced, was made sense of in ancient times. This meaning-making, in turn, will likely carry over into the lives of people who treat the Bible as a source of guidance and comfort. Thus, in investigating biblical stories, exegesis could perhaps go where ethnography might not be equipped to tread.

The rise of the "Evangelical trafficker" in Brazil

A closer connection between Evangelical churches and trafficking organizations in informal Brazilian communities can first be observed in the period of rampant economic and political instability that followed the end of the military regime in 1985 (see Siuda-Ambroziak, 2014). As presidents struggled to contain the indigence and exasperation of their constituents, both Evangelical church attendance and violent crime indices soared across the country (ibid.). The Pentecostal brand proved to be the greatest winner among the Evangelical denominations. From a small-scale revival among Latvian Baptists in the south of Brazil in 1909 (Ronis, 1974), the

[3] In the limited context of this article, gang and criminal organization are used interchangeably, in the general sense of a group that pursues activities deemed illegal. In Brazil, this will nearly always involve drug trafficking.

[4] The studies describe a whole range of criminals' relationship to the church, from sporadic participation through involvement without leaving the gang to full conversion and abandoning the life of crime.

Pentecostal movement swept in waves (Freston, 1995) across the nation, reaching 25 million members in 2010 and outnumbering by over 3 to 1 all other non-Pentecostal Evangelical confessions (Alves, 2019, p. 1210, based on the 2010 IBGE census). At the same time as church attendance rose, emergent criminal organizations were slicing up the country among themselves. Many of them, like Primeiro Comando da Capital, the most powerful criminal organization in Brazil (Gortázar & Alessi, 2020), established in 1993, survive to this day.

In informal communities, the ties between impromptu church fellowships and organized crime can, on a practical level, be viewed as a marriage of convenience. The decentralized, entrepreneurial model of Evangelical church planting means fellowships can spring up in an unstructured, makeshift way, making them perfect money laundering opportunities (Cunha, 2015, pp. 89ff). Spiritual help offered by the church acts as a safety valve and provisional remedy for people impacted by the traffic (Cunha, 2015; Dias, 2008). Not insignificantly, the ethos of political involvement that characterizes much of the Pentecostal movement after 1985 (Siuda-Ambroziak, 2014) means that participation in the church can translate into a measure of political influence at a local level and beyond.

The conviviality of church and crime in informal communities manifests itself on a spectrum. Some criminals take advantage of the "Evangelical exemption" to make their getaway from the gang, but substantial numbers go to Evangelical churches without necessarily leaving the life of crime. As Cunha (2009) writes,

> These traffickers: 1) frequent Evangelical services; 2) take part in campaigns and prayer chains; 3) support congregations with tithes or direct offerings; 4) approach the Evangelical network for protection and freedom from Evil; 5) promote and finance Evangelical events in the favelas; 6) promote birthday thanksgiving services for them and their families; 7) commission Bible-themed wall and billboard paintings[5] (p. 231);

they also have sound knowledge of the Bible and hold their own in conversations with "missionaries" (p. 232). Apart from these behaviors, traffickers' Evangelical allegiance manifests itself in gang-sanctioned violence against Afro-Brazilian religions (Dias, 2012) and in names, symbols, and ornaments alluding to biblical themes (Alessi, 2021; Cunha, 2015; Biondi, 2010, p. 52). The "Evangelical trafficker" can "only" be dealing drugs, although belonging to a criminal organization usually puts one at the risk of shouldering more violent responsibilities. Some examples are extreme, such as Rio de Janeiro's drug lord Arão (Aaron), whose record includes a homicide and whose men are known to have committed gruesome killings (Alessi, 2021). Many fall between these two extremes, looking to their faith to help them come to terms with what needs to be done (e.g., Cunha, 2015, 2009).

[5] In the original: "Esses traficantes 1) freqüentam os cultos evangélicos; 2) participam de campanhas e correntes das igrejas; 3) fazem contribuições para as igrejas através de doações diretas à lideranças ou através de dízimo; 4) aproximam-se da rede evangélica para pedir proteção e livramento do Mal; 5) promovem e financiam eventos evangélicos na favela; 6) promovem cultos de ação de graça para comemorarem seus aniversários e/ou de seus familiares; 7) mandam pintar muros e outdoors com mensagens bíblicas na favela" (all translations mine, KJZ).

The importance of stories consumed for the research on (gang) violence

This is an exploration of how the Hebrew Bible concepts could be applied to the study of gang-related violence in Brazil. As such, we need to ask the question of how the Hebrew Bible concepts could trickle down to inform actions of traffickers in Brazilian favelas and also whether there is any precedent of research that similarly looks at the role of literature in the study of violence. Indeed, the power of stories has already been explored by studies of political violence (see review in Copeland, 2019). Attention has been paid, for example, to stories peddled by terrorist organizations to potential recruiters or to texts that terrorists claim have radicalized them, like William Luther Pierce's Turner Diaries, "white nationalism's deadly Bible" (Berger, 2016). Another relevant field is psychology research, which has explored the mechanics and effects of "transportation," i.e., being engrossed in a story to the point of having one's life changed by it (e.g., Green & Brock, 2002). One can only imagine the story may be even more powerful when billed to the recipient as sacred. For some of the Hebrew Bible stories, Mircea Eliade's remarks on the religious man's desire to imitate the acts of the mythical hero (1967, p. 23) take on ominous undertones.

This article constitutes an analysis of concepts embedded in stories and not a formal analysis of the stories themselves.[6] That is why a straightforward definition of a story will be adopted here, and no distinction between a "narrative" and a "story" will be made.[7] We talk of a story when we are presented with a string of events joined together, not unlike beads on a thread—although this succession does not have to be linear; at times, it can resemble an intricately beaded wampum rather than a simple string of beads. What is important for the context of this article is that there is a mutual give and take between the experience and the story weaved on the canvas of this experience (Ricoeur, 1984). The experience lends the story its *raison d'être*, but the story infuses the experience with meaning, so much so that "a life is not 'how it was' but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold" (Bruner, 1987, p. 31). In this way, stories could be said to change our past and, consequently, shape our future. The concepts and techniques for storytelling are acquired in our social milieu with language, and the skill develops throughout our lives, as the assortment of these tools is updated and expanded.

In the research on gang-related violence in Brazil, elicited narratives have predominantly been treated as ethnographic research methods; indeed, most of the Brazilian research cited in this article uses them to some extent. This means they are mostly explored as a source of information; their role in shaping this information is acknowledged only marginally.

In the context of the "Evangelical trafficker," one should note that the Evangelical movement's force, in general, hinges on "stories" heard from the pulpit, with charismatic preachers driving Protestant revivals and church attendance (Dias, 2012,

[6] Such an analysis would only be in order once the narratives from subjects are elicited in a field study.

[7] An excellent discussion on the topic is offered in Copeland (2019), who also made me aware of relevant story-oriented research mentioned in this section, like Bruner (1987), Berger (2016); and Green & Brock (2002).

p. 20). The doctrine of universal priesthood means that any believer can share, and is encouraged to share, how the "Word of God" has "become flesh" in their personal life. The habit of personal "quiet time," i.e., the time spent reading the Bible and meditating on its everyday application, is a fixture of Protestant ethics and a frequent theme of exhortations from the pulpit. It makes sense, then, to posit a circle of story consumption and production among Evangelical traffickers in Brazil, in which the criminals use the stories heard to make sense of their experiences and perpetuate the storylines they pick up on, adapting them in the process. The following section explores what storylines they have to work with and how they could relate it to their own experience, based on research to date. Hopefully, this section will also offer novel explanations for some of the abovementioned phenomena.

The Hebrew Bible storylines (after Niditch 1993) in the favela context

The Hebrew Bible talks of war and violence in many stories produced by different authors at varying periods and contexts. Taking another's life in peacetime is proscribed in the Decalogue and elsewhere (e.g., Ex 21:23–25; Lev 24:17–22; Num 35:30–34; Deut 19:21). In the Hebrew Bible, God is described as the sovereign giver and taker of life, the source of life itself (cf. Bauckham 2008, pp. 247–248), so any killing might be seen as a usurpation of the ultimate divine right. Although the transgression is not always punished in kind, it is circumscribed by hefty repercussions, with wantonly spilled blood described as polluting the land (Num 35:30–34). Understandably, the loosening of such heavy circumscriptions in wartime must be accompanied by distinct war ethics (cf. Wright, 1942, pp. 1288–1291), and biblical stories reflect that. According to Niditch (1993), the tales could be grouped into identifiable yet often permeable divisions. Most prominent among them[8] are the bardic tradition and the trickster genre, as well as stories that center around the notion of *herem*, a concept translated as consecration, devotion, annihilation, ban, vow, or curse.

The first two groups, the bardic tradition and the trickster genre, are underpinned by the ethics of fair play between equals and the perceived right to self-defense, respectively. The bardic tales talk of warriors' acts of valor and include the sagas of David or Gedeon; according to Niditch (1993, p. 95), they turn on the development of a professional warrior group. The trickster genre features an underdog who uses wit and stealth in a struggle against a stronger oppressor. Israel's story may be seen as told from the underdog angle, especially in the books recounting the nation's formative years, like Joshua, Judges, or 1Samuel, where Israelites are repeatedly portrayed as inferior to their enemies in terms of numbers, weapons, and social development.[9] The underdog plays dirty and is capable of vicious cruelty, but their disempowered status shields them from moral judgment. Hence, Jael and Samson may be hailed as

[8] Niditch (1993) proposes a few other divisions that are not mentioned here.

[9] Throughout these books, stealth and divine help are described as factors in Israelites' victories, and heroes often fight with improvised weapons, like a donkey jaw or a slingshot. The gear disadvantage is spelled out in 1Sam 13:19–22.

heroes even though their acts violate hospitability and kinship laws (Judg 4:17–23; 14–15); Samson, in fact, is one of the biblical characters who kill civilians at random. In another example, Ehud's killing of King Eglon is described in light ribald style (Judg 3:12–30) while a similarly clandestine killing of the commander Abner by his equal Joab (2Sam 3:22–39) is judged harshly as a breach of the warrior code.

The two traditions described above have an obvious bearing on our context. The code of conduct in Brazilian criminal organizations is often specific and strict, as has been explored in research (Biondi, 2018; 2010; Rocha, 2017). Violence against people uninvolved in traffic is generally proscribed,[10] though this proscription is relaxed when traffickers employ terrorist tactics. More importantly, criminal organizations see themselves as, at their core, defending the interests of a group perceived as disadvantaged and vulnerable. One example is Primeiro Comando da Capital, whose 1997 statute gives its objective as "unity in the fight against the injustice and oppression inside prison"[11] (Jazadji, 1997; cf. Gortázar & Alessi, 2020). In individual narratives, gang members in Mexico underscore their socially disadvantaged status and the corresponding feelings of expendability that, in their eyes, justify extreme violence (Garcia, 2018, pp. 63–81, 101–103).

The third division of stories centers on the concept of *herem*. In the Hebrew Bible, the root חרם is connected to a wide range of meanings that are not easily reconcilable at first glance. The primary, tangible meaning seems to be a permanent offering to the deity (Lohfink, 1986). This implies that the entity offered is excluded from any other use (hence the translation "ban"). The idea of setting an entity—an object or a human—apart from the mundane brings the concept of חרם together with קדש; indeed, the two appear together in Lev 27:28–29. However, while קדש opens up its own semantic perspective, חרם appears, strikingly, also in the context of war, often constructed in opposition to taking pity (e.g., Deut 7:2–5; 13:9; 1Sam 15:3; Niditch, 1993, p. 80). Thus, the consecration implied by *herem* carries the sense of indiscriminate annihilation. In many stories, this means the wholesale killing of the civilian population, but it can also be applied to individuals.

According to Niditch, the concept is linked to two distinct understandings of war. The first one, which Niditch (1993, pp. 28–55) suggests might be more ancient, sees war-related violence as an act of sacrifice and rests upon a belief in a deity who accepts, and is pleased by, human sacrifice. In this framework, the ethos of indiscriminate killing turns, paradoxically, on the idea that human life is the ultimate value and the most precious offering. This approach also exempts warriors from making moral choices about whom to spare on the battlefield. There is no ambiguity to agonize over, no bargaining over lives, and, at least theoretically, no reason for guilt. The Hebrew Bible stories which Niditch reads with this understanding are often the stories of the conquest of Canaan, e.g., Josh 6:17–21; Num 21:2–3; Deut 2:34–35; 3:6–7.

[10] Both the statute and practice of PCC, for example, prohibit unsanctioned killing (see Jazadji, 1997; Biondi, 2018; 2010; Gortázar, Alessi, 2020). Likewise, a prominent theme of prayers recorded by Cunha (2009, pp. 252–253) is the traffickers' plea for not having to take civilian lives.

[11] In the original: "a união na Luta... contra as injustiças e a opressão dentro da prisão". Both the 1997 statute and the updated 2017 version are available online: https://faccaopcc1533primeirocomandodacapital.org/ (date of access: 18 Feb 2023).

In the second understanding, war is conceived of differently – it is now an instrument of divine justice. The objects of violence must be punished because they have transgressed the divine law. In this framework, the enemy ceases to be a precious sacrifice and becomes filth that must be stamped out and eradicated.[12] Niditch reads the story of Achan (Josh 7) in this way, as well as other stories in which *herem* turns against individuals who in some way have transgressed against its precepts, like the stories of Saul (1Sam 15) or the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead (Judg 21).

Based on the above, two perspectives may be distinguished, with war seen bifocally as holy and polluting. The enemy is at once elevated and dehumanized, although their fate is sealed either way. In line with this double vision, warriors in the Hebrew Bible are sometimes described as dedicating themselves to the task (not unlike priests; Ex 19:10ff; 1Sam 21:4–5; Jer 6:4; Joel 3:9) but also in need of purification (Num 31:19). The ethics of *herem* is unassailable, but the permanence of "the ban" is disputed, with people like Rahab or Jonathan managing to redeem themselves through acts of devotion (Judg 6) or valor (1Sam 14:27–37) despite proclamations that such redemption is not possible (Lev 27:28).

In the Hebrew Bible, the various perspectives on war do not compete but rather coexist superimposed one upon the other, with individuals manipulating them to their own advantage. Saul, for example, invokes "the ban" to boost his army's morale (1Sam 14:24ff). David cynically murders whole cities (1Sam 27:8–12[13]). Joshua persuades his army that the loss at Ai is the fault of Achan's transgression, while Rahab shrewdly saves herself and her family by betraying her city and preemptively offering herself to the invader's deity (Judg 6–7). Perhaps tellingly, cunning charismatic leaders like David or Jephthah remain popular in the gangster lore (Cunha, 2021, p. 90; 2009, pp. 245, 251; Brenneman, 2011, p. 276), even though their moral records are far from stellar.

Again, the bearing of the *herem* optics upon the context of Brazilian gang-related violence is readily observable. The bifocal viewing of war and its victims would prove especially useful while making sense of and justifying terrorist tactics the groups resort to when pressed; the duality within this perspective would capture well the conflicting feelings perpetrators might feel towards their victims. Likewise, the holy and polluting nature of warfare could further finetune Rocha's (2017) observations about how certain civilian killings go unavenged and unpunished in the favelas – the distinguishing factor, it seems, is the victim's contact with the traffic (pp. 281–327), or, in terms of this article, the sphere of "the ban." Finally, the figure of the warrior as both a consecrated priest (hence, an out-law) and a person in need of purification goes a long way toward explaining the porosity between Evangelical churches and drug trafficking organizations. Both spheres deal in total dedication. Moreover, warriors are in God's business of the giving and taking of life;[14] hence, it

[12] Niditch discusses Num 31 as a separate instance, in which the filth takes on the meaning of ritual impurity (1993, pp. 78–89)

[13] The author paints this move as a practical strategy, but the question remains how David sold his ruthlessness to the men who implemented his commands (see below) or how they themselves made sense of it.

[14] The warriors do not have to kill to be in this business – if they are in the position to spare a life, they are already in God's (sacred) business.

would make sense that the only direction they could move away from this position is into another consecrated sphere, i.e., the church. If they wish to move into the profane area, this is possible in theory; however, upon the exit, they will need to pay the price of civilians' reaching into the sacred area, which we know is death. This is an alternative, or at least complementary, explanation for why the wages of leaving the gang is always death,[15] a custom Brenneman (2011, pp. 133ff) explains in mostly practical terms. Overall, the postulations advanced in this paragraph nuance the idea that life is cheap for traffickers. To the contrary, the strict circumscriptions that surround both the entry to and the exit from criminal organizations would suggest that this callousness, if genuine and not merely projected, is, at best, only a part of a highly complex and sensitive picture.

Testing the connection: toward a field study

The previous section has shown that there is enough information in research to date to support the use of Hebrew Bible concepts in the study of Brazilian gang-related violence. However, using other researchers' data is satisfactory only at a preliminary research stage. Judging that the parallels drawn seem promising, testing the connection in a focused field study could yield more precise information.

Some questions worth exploring are, e.g., What tales circulate in the communities? How do their popular versions differ from the Biblical text? How are they interpreted and inhabited? How are they transmitted? Is the church activity a factor, or are the stories gleaned from personal "quiet times"? What is the role of oral transmission? How do church agents or theology impact the mediation of these stories? How are the stories sourced for meaning? How do these stories contextualize violence and violence-doing? Is there any syncretism or coexistence of Biblical and Afro-Brazilian mythology? Are there any common or preferred themes? Can a uniform concept akin to *herem* be distinguished, or are the understandings more diffuse, diverse, and decentralized? How do these concepts fit into the broader context of the "moral grammar of crime"[16] (Rocha, 2017)? Could a complementary "theology of crime" be posited from the data?

Some questions that could be asked of our subjects include: What is a biblical story/character you most resonate with? What biblical stories/characters do you hear referenced in your community? Do you know the story of Jael/Dinah/Achan etc.? Where do you know it from? What does it mean to you? What other biblical stories about war/violence do you know? Do you know any stories of *Orixás*[17] that talk of war/violence? How are they similar to biblical ones or different from them?

[15] This custom is not always enforced, and there are a few different ways besides the "Evangelical exception," but it remains the general rule, see Brenneman (2011, p. 117ff).

[16] Rocha (2017, pp. 17; 256ff) argues for the existence of a "moral grammar of crime," defined as "a loosely articulated repertoire of practices, values, convivialities, norms, interdictions, and typologies that together form the moral system underpinning the relationships between actors of the 'world of crime'".

[17] *Orixás* are spirit deities venerated in Afro-Brazilian religions.

Conclusion

This article has investigated whether the Hebrew Bible concepts of war and violence could be applied to study gang-related violence in Brazil. To this end, it has relied chiefly on biblical research, terrorism and political violence research, and relevant research in drug-related violence in Central and South America. The results of this analysis suggest that such an application could shed new light on the oft-confounding porosity between Evangelical Christianity and trafficking circles in Brazil, with novel explanations proposed here for some facets of this phenomenon. Ultimately, more research is needed because this exegetic, story-driven approach has not yet been explored in Brazilian research. This proposal highlights the importance of exploring interdisciplinary avenues in research and the ongoing relevance of sacred texts in the lives of their proponents.

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